

# HAMUN 44

## SPECPOL

### Topic A: Privatization of Space and the Role of Government Space Agencies



Houston Area Model United Nations

## Letter from Dias

Hello delegates,

My name is Nikola Skerl, and I want to welcome you to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee of the 45th Houston Area Model United Nations. I am a freshman International Relations and Global Studies student at the University of Texas at Austin, and I have the esteemed honor of being your chair for the duration of this conference. Our topics for this conference are concerning the privatization of space and the role of government space agencies, and the expanding economic crisis in Venezuela.

The ever expanding frontier into space, especially concerning the recent interest increase with private corporations such as SpaceX and Blue Origin make these topics specifically pertinent, while the economic calamity in Venezuela stresses urgency for a unique and insightful solution. With that, I hope that we have a productive session with forward looking resolutions that are truly out of this world.

Exposure:

### Committee Background

Since 1993, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) has been handling the toughest issues in international security and global policy. Originally designed to help nations with problems surrounding self-determination and decolonization, an uncharted territory for many new countries, SPECPOL continues to handle the most difficult and unexplored topics at the United Nations. SPECPOL takes on many issues before they are moved to the Security Council, as a way of starting discussion, analyzing research and understanding the scope of the problem that may be completely new to delegates before it is moved into more strategic, policy-oriented decisions. SPECPOL's resolutions are not binding, so the goal of this committee is to create the most persuasive and thorough resolutions as to move them forward to other committees with authority. The topics brought forth during this session will be "Privatization of Space and Role of Government Space Agencies," as well as the "Economic Crisis in Venezuela." Only recently has the United Nations, and the world at large, considered these frontiers as part of our global scope. But as the Internet has become the center of world-wide commerce, culture and communication, the issues that have always faced us will continue in the cyber world. With increasing scientific knowledge, space also becomes increasingly accessible, creating endless possibilities for research and business. Every country has a stake in these issues, regardless of their region, alliances or national power. We challenge you to think deeply and creatively about the problems at hand and understand the challenge behind such modern problems.

### Statement of Problem 1

The launching of the Soviet satellite "Sputnik 1" in 1960 launched a new era in human history centered around the recently opened frontier in the stars above our world. On December 13th, 1959, the United Nations created a small, expert unit tasked with discovering and advising on peaceful uses of outer space. This group, eventually formalized through the

passage of United Nations Resolution 1472 (XIV), the International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space treaty, was tasked with ensuring cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space, and share information regarding outer space and its exploration. Notable resolutions and treaties established by the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, a subsidiary of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, include the "Outer Space Treaty," concerning principles governing the activities of states in the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, the "Rescue Agreement," concerning the rescue of astronauts, the return of astronauts and the return of objects launched into outer space, and the "Moon Treaty," concerning activities of states on the moon and other celestial bodies. Today, private corporations such as SpaceX, Blue Origin, Virgin Galactic, and Boeing operate in an area traditionally dominated by states.

Changing dynamics and needs of humanity to operate in space place pressure on the existing legal infrastructure already established by the United Nations. For Hamun 45, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee must find a way to incorporate the introduction of private ventures and re-evaluate the restrictions and capabilities of governments to operate in space.

#### History of the Problem:

The 1967 Outer Space Treaty firmly establishes a global position on the neutrality of space between the powers and states of the world. It affirms the prohibition on weapons of mass destruction being placed in outer space, and more importantly, forbids any terrestrial organization to lay territorial claim to any extraterrestrial body such as the Moon. The basis of extraterrestrial law lies in the Outer Space Treaty, along with its sister treaties, the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention, the Registration Convention, and the Moon Treaty, which was most recently passed in 1979. The general pursuit of space has been internationally agreed upon to be non-exploitative and completely cooperative regardless of affiliation on the surface. The United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space handles agreements and advises the United Nations on matters concerning the use of outer space. Litigation handled by this committee tends to be vague and undefined due to a lack of extreme pressure for a solid framework to work in outer space, due to a very small percentage of the world's countries being able to actually launch into space.

In 1998 Canada, the European Space Agency's constituent states, Japan, the Russian Federation, and the United States joined to sign the 1998 ISS Agreement, pledging support to an international station dedicated to research. This agreement provides, among other things, that NASA is the lead agency in coordinating the member states' contributions to and activities on the space station, and that each nation has jurisdiction over its own module(s). The agreement also provides for protection of intellectual property and procedures for criminal prosecution. This agreement may very well serve as a model for future agreements regarding international cooperation in facilities on the Moon and Mars, where the first off-world colonies and scientific/industrial bases are likely to be established.

Most recently in 2008, several nations including Luxembourg and the United States have updated their statutory space law with the Basic Space Law.

#### Current Situation:

Though dozens of countries have launched citizens into space, only a handful actually have the means to launch rockets consistently. Among these are, the United States, the

Russian Federation, China, Iran, Israel, Italy, North Korea, South Korea, India, Japan, France, the Ukraine, and the various constituents of the European Space Agency. However, around the world, corporations have expressed and acted upon private interest to explore and commercialize space. SpaceX is famed for developing a re-usable rocket that has been used in numerous launches for NASA, and Blue Origin follows closely behind. There exists no legal framework for the operation and development of corporations and private entities in space, which is especially concerning due to lucrative possibilities of resource exploitation such as asteroid mining and satellite data. Furthermore, the United States in 2017 has expressed interest in military developing outer space contrary to previously signed treaties, and espionage satellites have existed for decades. The time to re-evaluate our planet's use of outer space is now, and SPECPOL delegates should think about the needs and demands of all these entities in an effort to best regulate the exploration of the cosmos.